

THE MORNING NEWS

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TOB and Dana Arendz rule Aruba's Youth Queen Pageant



New Queen Dana Arendz with first runner-up Lynn Xena Angela and second runner-up Gabriela Croes



Gabriela Croes Best Show in her costume

ORANJESTAD-- On Friday evening, February 7, the Aruba



Dana Arendz wins Best Costume

Entertainment Center in Oranjestad was packed to the rafters with highly energetic supporters of the seven candidates for Aruba's 51st Youth Queen. This year, there was particularly vigorous competition and participation, on the stage and in the

audience, for the landmark 60th Diamond Jubilee Carnival.

However, among the field of seven lovely and talented young ladies, judges and the audience had to agree, Dana Arendz, representing the TOB Carnival Group, was a standout. Her presentation garnered her the titles of Miss Popular, Best Costume, Best Speech and Miss SETAR, for winning the SMS voting competition conducted by Aruba's national telecommunications company. It was no surprise to anyone when she was finally crowned Carnival Youth Queen by Landa Henriquez, owner of Aruba Trading Company, which is the exclusive agent for Revlon products on Aruba, the major sponsor of this year's pageant.

Continued on page 4

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Winter storm looms early Tuesday for Charlotte, Carolinas

Meteorologists said confidence is growing that one and possibly two rounds of winter weather are headed for the Charlotte region this week.

Accumulating snow could begin late today or early tomorrow, they say, possibly followed by a mix of snow, freezing rain and rain Wednesday.

Much of the Carolinas will be affected by the storm, say forecasters.

Winter storm watches already are posted across parts of Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, and the Charlotte area. The watches include the Atlanta area, where snowfall two weeks ago caused chaos on the city's roadways.

Forecasters say the storm that would bring snow Tuesday is just reaching the Pacific Northwest, so it is too early to get a good gauge on how much snow will fall. But in a morning briefing, National Weather Service meteorologist Andrew Kimball said that based on current

computer models, 2 to 4 inches would appear likely for the Charlotte region.

The Weather Service's current outlook calls for 3.1 inches in Charlotte.

Parts of the Carolinas and Georgia will be at risk of an ice storm, say forecasters. Computer models indicate a layer of above-freezing air will work into the middle levels of the atmosphere at times during the storm. That could cause the snow to melt into rain but freeze when it reaches the surface, where temperatures would be below freezing.

Charlotte-area residents might find all this hard to believe it, as forecasters expect high temperatures near 60 degrees.

But an arctic high pressure system is forecast to bulge southward from the Great Plains and Great Lakes late Sunday night. That will send cold air into the Southeast, and the cold air is expected to intensify during the day Tuesday.

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"Apprenticeship" program for Aruba soon to be realized



ORANJESTAD – Recently, Aruba Trade and Industry Association – ATIA – together with the Aruba Rehabilitation and Youth Protection Foundation, organized a multi disciplinary dialogue. During the dialogue, public and private sectors interchanged opinions and information on the Apprenticeship Program initiated by the Rehabilitation Service. The objective is to help the youth who have been or are at risk of falling in the hands of the penal system to get socially involved in the labor market and with the community in general.

For ATIA and commerce in general, employment of "risk youth" – youngsters who are not going to school (drop outs / expelled) or youngsters who have already had runs in with the justice system – is a far-reaching, multi factorial and complicated problem. Most of the time, these youngster do not have enough work experience nor the necessary qualifications to do a job. But, according to ATIA, a job provides salary, tempo, structure and self-esteem. According to various studies, having a job and keeping a job has a preventive effect. A youngster with an education or who works, is less likely to fall back into the criminal circle.

For ATIA, the prevention of crime is imperative. The association encourages companies, as part of their "Corporate Social Responsibility", to opt for helping these youngsters get

socially active in our labor market. Just giving these youngsters a job, however, does not come automatically, the government's cooperation is also very important. To get these youngsters socially active again requires complete focus of various offices and disciplinary professionals.

This is what the proposed Apprenticeship is about.

The program offers youth the opportunity to follow a study and internship at a company for a period of 10 months. They will also get professional supervision and the necessary rehabilitation guidance, thus giving them the chance to become a viable prospect in the labor market.

The apprenticeship program, which is an initiative of the Minister of Justice, has the support of all ministries involved; the Ministers of Labor and Education are said to stand firm behind this program.

ATIA, representing the commerce, together with the Chamber of Commerce support the program.

The apprenticeship offers various advantages for a company:

a) The youngster will work for 10 months for a company based on a training agreement. This enables the employer to know the youngster for 10 long months and take the necessary time to help educate him without being tied by an employment contract.

b) The youngster can follow a specific study and

work in a specific sector, giving the employer the opportunity to teach the youngster the requirements for that specific job. After 10 months the employer has the option to offer the youngster a permanent job, a win-win situation.

The Aruba Rehabilitation and Youth Protection Foundation together with the Aruba



Public Evening Courses Department and Ministry of Justice will offer the youngster a study program where they can go to school and work for a period of 10 months. The Aruba Public Evening Courses department will take care of the placing for the youngster to attend school twice a week.

The studies offered (based on

the amount of applications) are:

- Training Assistant Mechanic
- Training Assistant Commercial Assistant
- Training Assistant Maintenance Mechanic
- Training Assistant Construction

Continued on page 3

Caiso and Soca Monarch Competitions begin tomorrow



SAN NICOLAS -- Aruba is gearing up for the most important musical event on their annual calendar: the Caiso and Soca Monarch contest, beginning with three nights of pre-finals tomorrow. Organizers and the head of the Foundation Musica, Hildward Croes, welcomed media to observe the fantastic set up in the newly completed Carnival Village in

San Nicolas, where the event will take place.

A large patch of land formally behind the walls of the refinery was reclaimed last year and converted into a park and amphitheater area, particularly targeted at hosting carnival events in San Nicolas, but available to the community throughout the year.

The contest, traditionally

known as the Calypso and Roadmarch, will result in the Roadmarch King or Queen, and the song that will become the anthem for the remaining carnival parades. Calypso is a musical form focusing on political and social commentary in its lyrics, often humorous, but always timely and with a significant message.

Continued on page 4

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“Apprenticeship” program for Aruba soon to be realized

Continued from page 2

The Rehabilitation Foundation works closely with the Public Evening Courses department, social instances and the labor market in order to give these youngsters the necessary personal, educative and labor guidance. This will guarantee the stability during the program.

The Rehabilitation Foundation offers individual and group guidance through a number of courses.

They are:

- Social Skills
- Work Ethics

- Work Security
- Training in different social aspects
- How to budget your money

The companies must give the youngsters the chance to work 3 times a week with a trainee salary. The company must have a tutor to guide the youngster during his job.

The tutor can, by means of a traineeship work book, monitor if the youngster is competitive with the job he chose. The traineeship workbook will be submitted by the Public

Evening Courses Department. The Rehabilitation Foundation and Public Evening Courses department will stay in close contact with the tutor.

The Rehabilitation Foundation's goal is to get 40 youngsters to participate in the program. It is making an ap-

peal to all companies to help with this responsibility by offering participants an apprenticeship job. This will surely help them get the necessary structure and when finalizing the apprenticeship, the chance to get a diploma.

All participants had great

praise for this program and expressed their support for this innovative initiative. They are all conscious that by working together, we will devise and implement practical solutions for the wellbeing of our country.

As of February 7, 2014 e-Cuenta replaced by MiSETAR

ORANJESTAD — SETAR N.V. is improving the service to clients, and recently it has introduced a new online service, a self-service tool called MiSETAR. As of February 7, this new, innovative, modern service has replaced e-Cuenta, which clients used to obtain copies of their statements review their accounts. All existing e-Cuenta services, like viewing invoices online, printing invoices and checking payments, can be done on MiSETAR.

MiSETAR is accessible for all SETAR clients, on any laptop, desktop computer, tablet or smart phone. It enables clients to manage all their accounts online any time of the day or night.

The benefits of MiSETAR are:

- Online access to all information of the cellular package
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- View and print invoices and payments via MiSETAR
- Connect Pre-Paid cel-

lular numbers to the MiSETAR account

- 24/7 online access to MiSETAR via Smartphone, tablet, laptop and computer

- Request SIM card PUK code

- View the status of ongoing services status like cellular fixing and interferences

All SETAR residential clients have received an informative letter on how to register for the MiSETAR service. New clients or those who have not received a letter can pass at

any SETAR Teleshop to apply for MiSETAR.

Prepaid clients can register via MiSETAR on the SETAR website. They will receive a code via SMS on their cell phone. All e-Cuenta business clients will be approached by a SETAR sales representative, who will help clients with the registration and supply them with an informative registration letter of MiSETAR.

To register for MiSETAR is easy, just go to www.setar.aw and click on MiSETAR.

February 14 Romantic and Memorable

Valentine's Dinner

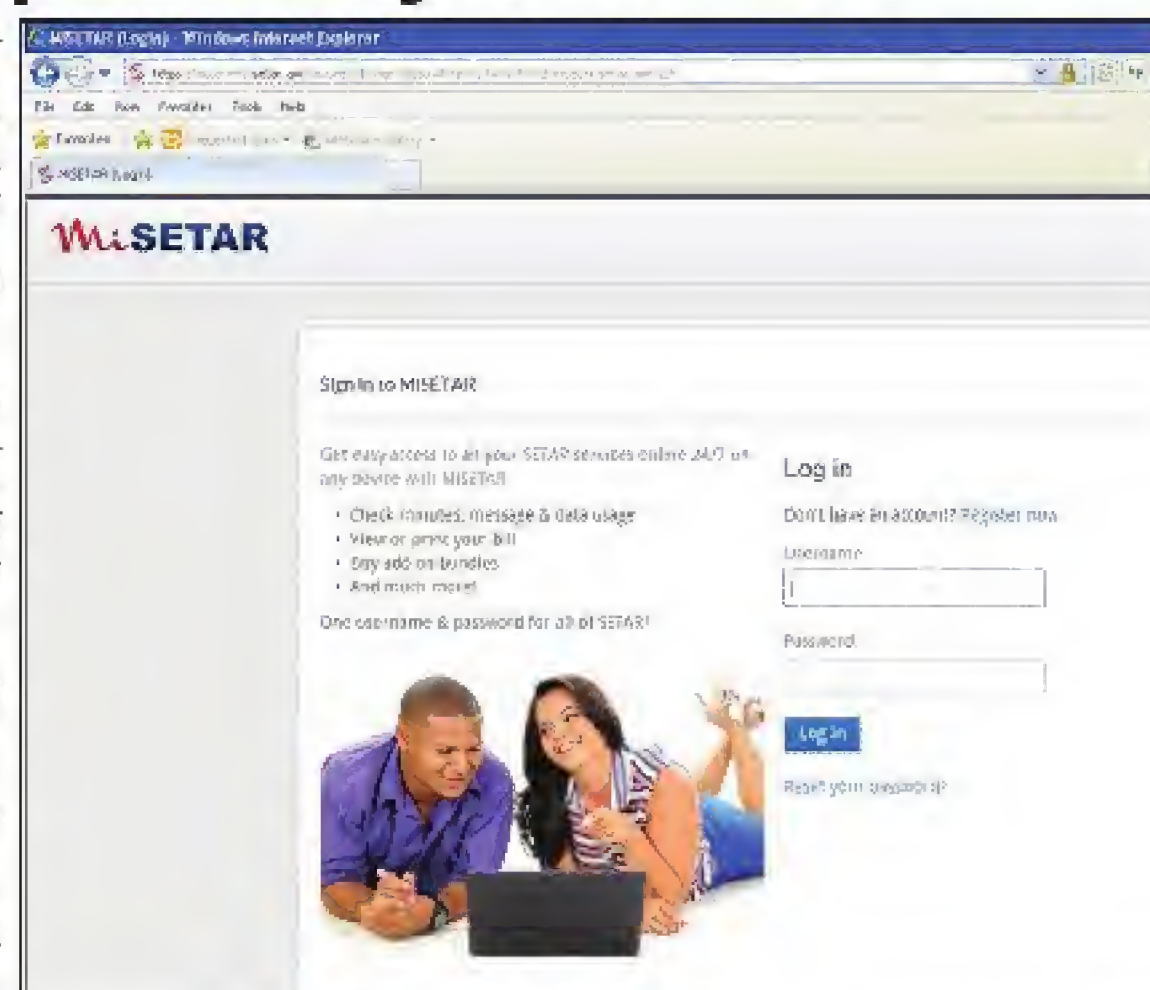
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 or
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 topped with scallops served with rice, vegetable and delight with saffron sauce
 or
Seafood trio combination
 served with rice and vegetable

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Caiso and Soca Monarch Competitions...

Continued from page 2



Sponsors and organizers

The organizers of this year's event report record participation, with 138 original musical compositions registered to be performed. 28 bands have inscribed to perform over the three nights of the pre-finals, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, February 11, 12 and 13. Many will be backing up more than one singing performance. On Tuesday, there will be 52 vocal performances, with some singers competing for both titles with two completely different compositions.

Wednesday, 44 performances will take place, with carnival icon, the multi-crowned Claudius Phillips, "Mighty Talent," again throwing his hat in the ring, and his son, "Mighty Talent Jr." last year's winner, finishing up the evening.

The final night of pre-finals will feature 43 performances. The selected bands and songs will do on to the Caisa and Soca Monarch Finals at the

Carnival Village on Saturday evening, February 15. Hildward Croes confirmed by will be following the example of this year's Tumba Contest, by having the finalists draw their place in the line-up immediately prior to the commencement of the final event.

Representatives of the major sponsors of this year's contest, Aruba Tourism Authority, Insel Air, and SETAR N.V. were on hand to wish great success to all competing, and a safe and congenial carnival to all those attending.

Tickets for the pre-finals are 20 Aruban florins and tickets for the final event are 45 Aruban florins. Tickets are being sold at all LOTTO outlets across Aruba, this is over 120 locations. Reasonably prices parking has been arranged with several venues within easy walking distance of the Carnival Village, including the Abraham De Veer School in San Nicolas.



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Aruba's 60th Carnival

TOB and Dana Arendz rule Aruba's Youth Queen Pageant

Continued from page 1



Landa Henriquez crowns a emotional Dana Arendsz of TOB



Shakira Quandt Santa Cruz Queen in costume

Despite all the signs, Dana was still surprised to be named the winner and responded with copious tears as the vast number of TOB supporters in the audience cheered her on.

Gabriela Croes, representing Oranjestad and barrio of Companashi, won the category of Best Show, and was named Second Runner Up. Lynn Xena Angela, the Youth Queen of Champagne Carnival Group, won the trophy for First Runner Up.

The pageant entails a presentation of a themed carnival costume and speech by the candidate, followed by a performance showcasing each candidates dancing talents and carnival spirit, from which a panel of a dozen judges select the winners.

Aruba's new Youth Queen will join the new Children's Queen, Sheqayli Ascencion, soon to be joined in the royal court by Mrs. Carnival and the Grand Carnival Queen, with their pageants scheduled for this Thursday, February 13 and Friday, February 21.

Rosalie Klein



Sammy van Eenennaam School Queen



Shaindra Ashby representing Royal in her costume

Aruba honors its loyal visitors

Recently, the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a group of loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba, as Distinguished Visitors and Ambassadors of Goodwill of Aruba. These symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba between 10 and 20 consecutive years (Distinguished Visitors) or for 20 or more consecutive years (Ambassadors of Goodwill).



Mr. Milton and Mrs. Bernice Siegal from South Yarmouth MA. were honored as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. Milton and Bernice are loyal guests of the Radisson Resort and when staying on Aruba they meet with so many friends they have known through the years. The Siegals always say that Aruba is the best Island in the Caribbean and they will continue to visit the Island for many more years to come. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel, representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, together with Mrs. Germaine Wever representing the Radisson Beach Resort and a big group of staff members and friends of Milton and Bernice.



Mr. Stuart and Mrs. Kathleen Nichols from Shelton, CT. were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill of Aruba. The certificate was presented by Mr. Ernest Giel together with Ms. Hilda Mills representing the Divi Village.



Salvatore and Laura Mannino resident of New York were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill



George and Eloise Leupold resident of Somers Point New Jersey were honored as Distinguished Visitors



Gene and Patricia Bitterberg resident of Wisconsin Brookfield were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill of Aruba. They are staying at the Costa Linda beach Resort.



Vincent and Joan Buzzetta of Jones Creek Florida were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill

US government to expand recognition of gay marriage

NEW YORK (AFP) - US Attorney General Eric Holder will expand government recognition of same-sex marriages in all federal courtrooms and prisons today, and ensure they receive the same benefits as heterosexual ones.

The move, which Holder announced Saturday at a gay rights dinner gala in New York, marks a major gain for advocates of same-sex couples after the Supreme Court issued two rulings expanding gay marriage rights last year.

Under the new policy, same-sex couples will enjoy the privileges even in states that do not recognize their marriages, so long as they legally wed in another state.

Among the key benefits the Justice Department will now ensure are extended to same-sex couples are the compensation fund for the September 11, 2001 attacks, as well as death

and educational benefits for the surviving spouses of police officers and firefighters injured or killed in the line of duty.

"In every courthouse, in every proceeding, and in every place where a member of the Department of Justice stands on behalf of the United States, they will strive to ensure that same-sex marriages receive the same privileges, protections and rights as opposite-sex marriages under federal law," Holder said.

Same-sex couples would also be held to the same legal standard as their heterosexual counterparts on matters such as how debts are handled in federal bankruptcy proceedings and visitation policies at federal prisons, as well as compassionate release or sentence reductions in certain cases of crisis involving their spouse.

Advocates of gay rights immediately hailed the decision

Hundreds evacuated from Syria's Homs on eve of talks

DAMASCUS (AFP) - Aid teams evacuated hundreds of exhausted civilians from besieged Homs city yesterday, as Syria's regime and rebels again accused each other of violating a truce ahead of new peace talks.

The evacuation of 420 of the 3,000 trapped people, who had been reduced to living off little more than olives and herbs after more than 600 days under siege, came as representatives from both sides converged on Geneva.

Damascus' delegation and members of the opposition began arriving for a second round of the so-called Geneva II talks scheduled to begin today.

Yesterday's evacuation from Homs was the second in three days after a UN-brokered truce for besieged districts of Syria's third city began on Friday.

Five men were killed when one besieged district was hit by mortar fire during yesterday's evacuation, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

They were the latest deaths in a nearly three-year conflict that has killed 136,000 people and displaced millions.

"Four hundred and twenty besieged people came out today from the Old City districts of Homs, and the operation is still under way," Homs governor Talal al-Barazi said.

Television footage showed women, children and elderly men getting off the buses that brought them out of the besieged areas.

They appeared visibly exhausted and frail, in a video broadcast by Beirut-based

channel Al-Mayadeen. Children, carried by their parents, looked pale.

The civilians were aided by UN staff and Syrian Red Crescent volunteers amid a strong Syrian army presence.

"We had nothing. All the children were sick, we even had nothing to drink," said one exhausted woman, her three children standing round her.

State television said the operation took place under fire from "armed terrorist groups" -- regime terminology for rebels.

But the Britain-based Observatory echoed claims by activists that at least five people were killed in shelling that targeted the besieged district of Qarabis.



REDON : Council workers set up a makeshift pathway using bricks and planks in a street flooded by the rise of the Vilaine river in Redon, western France, yesterday. Water is expected to rise until today in Redon, where the Vilaine and Oust rivers join. (AFP PHOTO)

Venezuelan president wants to talk to Toyota exec

CARACAS (AFP) - President Nicolas Maduro said on the weekend he wants to speak to Toyota's top official for Latin America after the carmaker said it would stop production here.

Toyota said Friday it would soon halt production at its only assembly plant in Venezuela because the world's largest automaker lacks hard currency to import parts due to government controls.

The temporary shutdown of the Japanese car maker's operations in the western city of Cumana is due to begin February 13 and last at least six weeks.

"I have already directed Industry Minister (Wilmer Barrientos) to call in the head of Toyota for Latin America, or have somebody come from Japan," Maduro said in an address on state television.

The plant produced nearly

9,500 vehicles in 2013.

Companies such as Toyota must go through a complex bureaucratic process to obtain dollars.

Venezuela is only providing dollars at the official rate of 6.3 bolivars to the dollar to importers of designated priority goods such as food and medical supplies.

Others who need dollars to pay overseas bills have to buy them at a higher rate at government-run auctions. Many companies have complained Caracas is not providing them with enough hard currency.

The currency controls have led to shortages of a wide range of basic necessities, and fueled an inflation rate that reached 56.2 percent last year.

Last year, 72,000 vehicles were made in Venezuela, down more than 30 percent from 2012.

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Vigilantes enter Mexican drug cartel's key bastion

MORELIA (AFP) - Vigilante militias that have fought a drug cartel in western Mexico for a year entered a key gang bastion on Saturday, manning checkpoints and helping federal forces find criminals. The civilian self-defense forces had their eye on Apatzingan for months, saying it was the "crown jewel" of the Knights Templar gang and a vital trade hub for the region's lime and avocado farmers. Vigilante leader Estanislao Beltran said that hundreds of his colleagues manned checkpoints outside the Michoacan state city of 120,000 to "check who goes in and out." Heavily armed men were seen building walls of sandbags outside Apatzingan, the main city in Michoacan's Tierra Caliente (Hot Land), a lush agricultural region. Another 150 vigilantes were deployed with police and military patrols inside Apatzingan to search "all the homes" of suspected gang members. The vigilantes said they had captured Antonio Plancarte, the brother of a recently arrested Knights Templar leader. Authorities did not confirm Plancarte's detention. The Knights Templar, a cult-like gang that claims to be the protector of Michoacan, has accused the vigilantes of working as a proxy force for the rival Jalisco New Generation drug cartel.

11 dead, 1,200 injured as heavy snow hits Japan



TOKYO (AFP) - The heaviest snow in decades in Tokyo and other areas of Japan has left at least 11 dead and more than 1,200 injured across the country, reports said Sunday. As much as 27 centimetres (10.6 inches) of snow was recorded in Tokyo by late Saturday, the heaviest fall in the capital for 45 years, according to meteorologists. The storm hit Tokyo on the eve of its gubernatorial election. Observers say the weather may affect voter turnout in the city of 13 million people. More than 20,000 households were without electricity early Sunday while airlines cancelled more than 400 domestic flights a day after over 740 flights were grounded.

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California leaders want smartphone 'kill switch'

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Californian leaders want to make it compulsory for smartphones or tablets sold in the state to have built-in "kill switches" to counter the rocketing number of thefts of the devices. State senator Mark Leno and other elected officials on Friday unveiled legislation requiring that new smartphones or tablets have technology that could be used to remotely render them useless. "With robberies of smartphones reaching an all-time high, California cannot continue to stand by when a solution to the problem is readily available," said Leno, a Democrat representing San Francisco. Backers called the bill the first of its kind in the United States; opponents fear it may allow hackers to shut down people's devices. The legislation would leave service providers or manufacturers, including iPhone maker Apple, facing fines if smartphones or tablets sold in California beginning next year don't include mechanisms to instantly disable them. The bill will be introduced within a few months, according to Leno. More than half of robberies in San Francisco involve mobile devices, and that share is three-quarters across the bay in the city of Oakland, according to Leno's office.

Sino-Brazilian consortium wins Brazil dam fight

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - A group led by China's State Grid Corp. Friday won rights to build power lines to the huge Belo Monte dam in Brazil's Amazon.

The IE Belo Monte group, which also includes two affiliates of state-controlled Eletrobras, offered to limit annual revenue to 434.6 million reais (\$182 million), 38 percent below the 701-million-reais ceiling.

State Grid has been operating in Brazil since 2010, when it purchased seven Brazilian energy companies. The two Eletrobras units -- Furnas and Eletronorte -- each have a 24.5 percent stake in the consortium, with the Chinese company accounting for the remaining 51 percent.

The group said 55 percent of

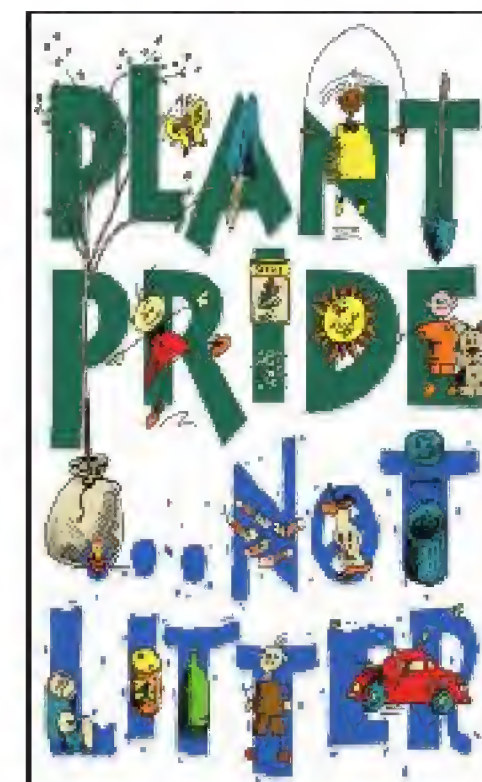
labor costs would be financed by the Brazilian Development Bank, or BNDES.

The consortium is due to transmit energy along a 2,100-kilometer (1,300-mile) route linking northern Para state to the southeastern state of Minas Gerais, with a capacity to transmit four gigawatts.

The Belo Monte dam, a \$13 billion project aiming to produce 11 gigawatts of electricity, is expected to flood a 500-square-kilometer (200-square-mile) area, displacing 16,000 people, according to the government. It would be the third-biggest dam in the world, after China's Three Gorges and Brazil's Itaipu in the south.

Indigenous groups fear the dam across the Xingu River, a tributary of the Amazon, will

harm their way of life. Environmentalists have warned of deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions and irreparable damage to the ecosystem.



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In US, 'natural' food may be anything but

WASHINGTON (AFP) - In the United States, pre-packaged foods loaded with artificial ingredients and chemicals can make it onto grocery store shelves boasting the label "natural."

Why? Because in America, there is no definition of "natural."

This gray area has led consumer advocates to threaten lawsuit after lawsuit against big food giants, alleging that their claims are misleading and illegal.

Some lawsuits have been merely threatened by CSPI, and eventually settled out of court after the company agreed to change labeling.

Others have been filed by private parties seeking class action payouts.

The latest involves Kraft Foods, maker of Crystal Light powdered drink mixes which contain artificial sweeteners and colors, a texturizer called maltodextrin and a synthetic preservative called butylated hydroxyanisole.

In January, CSPI notified



Kraft of its intent to sue if the word "natural" continues to appear on products like Natural Lemonade and Natural Lemon Iced Tea.

Gardner said talks with the company are ongoing, but given his experience -- he first sued Kraft over similar claims on its Capri Sun drinks in 2007 -- he expects Kraft to counter that the word "natural" relates to the flavor.

"I am not aware of a lemonade flavor. I am aware of lemon," Gardner said.

Many consumers believe 'natural' claims

Asked for comment, a Kraft spokeswoman told AFP that a federal judge in California re-

cently dismissed a similar claim against Crystal Light.

Foods that claim to be "natural" but clearly are not can slip past authorities because the main US regulatory agency, the Food and Drug Administration, has not formally defined "natural."

However, the regulator has sent several warning letters to companies in the past, FDA spokeswoman Theresa Eisenman told AFP in an email.

"Although the FDA has not established a formal definition for the term 'natural,' we do have a longstanding policy concerning the use of 'natural' in food labeling," she said.

The FDA has left Crystal Light alone, and consumer groups complain that regulators are not aggressive enough, leaving plenty of room for corporations to exploit well-meaning shoppers who appear to be susceptible to packaging claims.

According to the market research firm Nielsen, "natural" products produce over \$22 billion in annual sales.

A full 77 percent of US consumers polled said they believe "natural" claims at least some of the time, and nine percent said they always do.

Some companies have quietly dropped "natural" from their packages, including Naked Juice and Frito Lay chips, as the food industry faces thorny legal questions over genetically modified ingredients and common additives like corn syrup.

Castaway likely suffering post-traumatic stress, says doctor

MAJURO (AFP) - A castaway who says he survived 13 months adrift in the Pacific appears to be suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome, a doctor said Saturday, as officials confirmed he had been living in Mexico illegally.

Jose Salvador Alvarenga, a fisherman from El Salvador, washed up on a remote Pacific atoll over a week ago, telling a remarkable story of floating 12,500 kilometres (8,000 miles) from Mexico in his 24-foot boat after the engine broke.

He initially appeared to be in good spirits and reasonable health, but he has been in and out of hospital since being brought to the Marshall Islands capital Majuro last Monday.

At a media conference on Thursday, the 37-year-old was sullen and uncomfortable, mumbling a short thank-you to people in the Marshalls before departing the venue clutching two men for support.

Franklyn House, a retired American doctor working with the California-based Canvasback Missions group in the Marshall Islands, has observed and spoken with Alvarenga several times since his arrival, although he is not the attending

physician.

Fluent in Spanish, House said he believes Alvarenga is suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome because of the change in his demeanour from Monday when he was engaged with doctors to being withdrawn on Thursday.

"The first couple of days he was in the hospital, he was engaged and normal," House told AFP. "Thursday he showed signs of post-traumatic stress."

A diplomat from El Salvador's embassy in Japan, Diego Dalton, met with the castaway and "confirmed that the health of Mr Alvarenga is broken", the country's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Alvarenga, who said he survived on a diet of raw fish and birds while drinking turtle blood, urine and rainwater, is also suffering from back and leg problems.

"He was not really coherent. But he was talking clearly when he was discharged Friday."

"Following the events that he lived through, Mr Jose Salvador Alvarenga has asked for privacy to overcome this experience," the ministry's communications chief Irene Sanchez told AFP.

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Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

--Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and



secluded getaway; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of

Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area, also restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facili-

ties such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property, not the least is the future value of the

investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability. Or call us at 5862200 to arrange a personal tour!

Woody Allen attacks ex over abuse allegations



NEW YORK (AFP) - Film director Woody Allen on Friday again denied molesting his daughter and launched a furious attack on his ex-partner Mia Farrow, blaming her for the abuse allegations. In a nearly 2,000-word op-ed in The New York Times, Allen castigated his former partner over shocking allegations detailed by their daughter Dylan in the paper last week. "Of course, I did not molest Dylan," he wrote, adding that he had "loved" the girl he adopted with Farrow during their 12-year relationship that broke up in enormous acrimony. "I... hope one day she will grasp how she has been cheated out of having a loving father and exploited by a mother more interested in her own festering anger than her daughter's well-being." Allen also addressed reports that Ronan Farrow may be Frank Sinatra's son, not his. Allen said he raised the matter to "call attention to the integrity and honesty of a person who conducts her life like that," referring to the older Farrow.

Pope Benedict a year on: quiet life after making history

VATICAN CITY (AFP) - Those who have seen Benedict XVI since he retired agree: the former pontiff appears to have got a weight off his mind, leaving the complexities of Vatican politics behind for a simple life of prayer and piano.

One year on from the resignation announcement on February 11, the German pontiff who held the reins of the Church during an eight year, scandal-hit papacy appears to have been largely forgotten by the public.

Having a pope and a "pope emeritus" at the Vatican at the same time had sparked fears of confusion for the faithful, but Benedict has kept out of the limelight.

Before stepping down from St. Peter's Chair on February 28, he promised to live "hidden from the world", dedicating himself to a life of quiet prayer and swearing allegiance to whoever his successor would be.

The first images of him meeting new pope Francis shocked the Catholic world:



standing next to the energetic Argentine, the ex pontiff appeared suddenly to have aged 10 years, as if the weariness he felt during his papacy had finally caught up with him.

In May, he moved into a former monastery in the grounds of the Vatican -- which came with its own vegetable garden and a splendid view of Rome -- along with his personal secretary Georg Gaenswein and his housekeepers.

He is believed to have ventured out only twice: once for

a return trip to Castel Gandolfo and once to visit his brother Georg when he was hospitalised in Rome.

People who have spent time with him say he likes to listen to music and play the piano, and German cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Mueller has said he thinks the pope emeritus may be writing his autobiography.

His life is not shrouded in solitude: Benedict's 90-year-old brother has stayed with him for an extended period and close friends are known to have dropped by to see him, along with prelates and theologians eager to debate with a man renowned for his fierce intellect.

His relationship with Francis "is good, even if he does not necessarily agree with all his initiatives," a cardinal told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The 77-year-old Argentinian often pays homage to his predecessor, citing him in his texts, telephoning him for a chat or meeting him for breakfast.

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2013 sixth-hottest year, confirms long-term warming: UN

GENEVA (AFP) - Last year tied for the sixth-hottest on record, confirming that Earth's climate system is in the grip of warming that will affect generations to come, the UN's weather agency said.

Last year equalled 2007 as the sixth-warmest year since reliable records began in 1850, with a global land and ocean surface temperature that was 0.5 degrees Celsius (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) above the 1961-1990 average, the WMO said in a statement.

Thirteen of the 14 warmest years on record have occurred in the 21st century, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) chief Michel Jarraud told AFP.

The hottest were 2005 and 2010, which both saw temperatures about 0.55 C (1 F) above the long-term average.

Jarraud acknowledged in a statement that "the rate of warming is not uniform" in every country.

Last year, for instance, was the hottest year on record in

Australia, while the United States measured record highs in 2012.

But, Jarraud said, "the underlying trend is undeniable".

"Global warming... is occurring. There is absolutely zero doubt. But more important, it is due to human activities," he told AFP, pointing to record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

"Our action, or inaction, to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases will shape the state of our planet for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren," he said.

El Nino weather patterns, which warm surface temperatures, and their cooling La Nina counterparts are major drivers of natural variability in the climate.

But the WMO noted that neither condition occurred in 2013, which was warmer than both 2011 and 2012, which were cooled by La Nina.

El Nino occurs every two to seven years and last ended in May 2010, while the last La Nina faded away in April 2012.

Neither is caused by climate change, but scientists say rising ocean temperatures caused by global warming may affect their intensity and frequency.

"More than 90 percent of the excess heat being caused by human activities is being absorbed by the ocean," the WMO said.

The agency released the temperature data in advance of its Statement on the Status of the Climate in 2013, which

will be published in March.

In November, the WMO reported that sea levels reached a record high in 2013, making low-lying coastal regions more vulnerable to extreme weather.

Arctic sea ice shrank to its sixth-smallest summer area, albeit recovering slightly from the unprecedented melt of 2012, the agency reported.

Researchers have long warned that the chances are swiftly diminishing of limiting the global temperature rise over the next century to 2 C (3.6 F) over pre-industrial levels, defined as before 1750.

But there is little agreement globally on how to slow emissions of the greenhouse gases widely blamed for much of the temperature increase.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN's Nobel-winning group of scientists, says in the draft of an upcoming report that global emissions of greenhouse gases surged by an average 2.2 percent per year between 2000 and 2010.

This compared to 1.3 percent per year between 1970 and 2000.

Some experts say that on current trends, warming by 2100 could be 4 C (7.2 F) or higher, spelling drought, flood, storms and hunger for many millions of people.

While it is difficult to blame climate change for individual extreme weather events such as typhoon Haiyan, which killed 8,000 people in the Philippines last November, warming global temperatures are making such events more devastating, Jarraud said.

Genetic causes of schizophrenia are multiple: study



PARIS (AFP) - Schizophrenia is caused by a large number of rare genetic mutations rather than a few, easily-identifiable faulty genes, said scientists who compiled the world's largest database on the debilitating disorder.

Two studies said the genetic triggers for the mental illness that affects about one in 100 people were far more complex than previously thought.

Gathering data from nearly 7,000 people in Bulgaria and Sweden, two teams of scientists said genes implicated in schizophrenia worked in clusters to disrupt specific proteins.

They tend to be part of gene networks that govern signalling between brain cells, or deal with learning and memory, the researchers said.

The "finding is sobering but also revealing: it suggests that many genes underlie risk for schizophrenia and so any two patients are unlikely to share the same profile of risk genes," said Shaun Purcell of the Broad Institute in Massachusetts.

One of the studies compared the genetic sequences of 2,500 schizophrenia patients in Sweden with the same number of healthy individuals, looking for sites and patterns of mutations. The other compared the gene sequences of more than 600 sufferers and their parents in

"Both studies yielded further evidence that the disorder arises from the combined effects of many genes -- a condition known as 'polygenic'," said a Broad Institute statement.

Schizophrenia is a chronic, often debilitating illness, afflicting about 2.4 million adults in the United States alone. Symptoms include hallucinations, delusions and paranoia.

France fines Google \$200,000 for violating users' privacy



PARIS - A notice posted on Google's French portal notifies users that the company has been fined because of privacy 'breaches' on services such as Gmail, Google+ and YouTube. Google is fighting the fine, but did agree to post the note on its site for two days. France's privacy watchdog CNIL says it has enforced the fine because of "breaches" by Google. It is angry at Google for combining data collected on users across services such as Gmail, Google+ and YouTube. It is the second blow for Google in France during the past week. French authorities have also hit Google with a more than \$1 billion tax fine following an investigation into the online giant's accounts. Google is challenging the latest fine, but has complied with the order to display the punishment. Details about the fine are displayed on the Google French homepage.

Aruba Central Bank: Money supply went up

ORANJESTAD -- The Centrale Bank van Aruba concludes in its monthly bulletin of November 2013 that money supply went up by Afl. 58.6 million to Afl. 3,396.6 million, resulting from a rise in net domestic assets of Afl. 62.6 million and an Afl. 4.0 million decline in net foreign assets (excluding revaluation differences of gold and foreign exchange holdings). The rise in the domestic component of money supply was associated with an increase in domestic credit of Afl. 84.1 million, which was partially mitigated by a decline of Afl. 21.5 million in non-credit related balance sheet items. Domestic credit grew largely as a result of an Afl. 58.0 million increase in the net claims of the banking sector on the public sector, stemming mostly from a decline in government deposits of

Afl. 54.2 million. Claims on the private sector expanded by Afl. 26.1 million, attributed to increases in commercial loans, housing mortgages and consumer credit of, respectively, Afl. 13.1 (+1.0 percent), Afl. 11.7 million (+1.2 percent) and Afl. 1.1 million (+0.2 percent). The contraction in non-credit related balance sheet items was associated with clearing transactions, as well as increases in other liabilities and shareholder's equity.

The Afl. 4.0 million fall in net foreign assets was caused mainly by payments for imports of goods, which were largely mitigated by gross tourism receipts and net transfers from foreign accounts of resident companies.

In November 2013, the consumer price index (CPI) fell by 0.4 percent, compared to the

corresponding month in 2012. The factors causing this drop were transport, clothing & footwear, and household operation. Excluding the effect of food and energy (which partly impacts the housing and transport components), the core CPI remained unchanged, compared to November 2012. The 12-month average inflation rate was -2.7 percent in November 2013.

In November 2013, the number of stay-over visitors reached 88,296, which is 20.6 percent (+15,084 visitors) higher than in November 2012, owing to surges in visitors from Latin America, North America and Europe of, respectively, 10,407 (+55.6 percent), 4,349 (+9.6 percent) and 364 (+5.9 percent). The growth in the Latin American market was attributed mostly to an increase in arrivals from Venezuela (+10,653 visitors or 87.1 percent). The expansion in the North American market resulted from gains in the number of visitors from the United States (+4,518 visitors or 10.9 percent), while arrivals from Canada fell (-169 visitors or 4.6 percent). The modest growth in the European market was due predominantly to increases in arrivals from the Netherlands (+179 visitors or 5.6 percent), Germany (+100 visitors or 23.3 percent) and Italy (+36 visitors or 14.8 percent). The number of cruise visitors rose slightly by 551 (+0.8 percent) in November 2013, compared to the same month of the previous year. The number of ship calls increased to 36 in November 2013, up from 35 in November 2012.

In November 2013, total government revenue amounted to Afl. 92.0 million, Afl. 11.5 million higher than the same month of the previous year. This growth was brought about by increases in both non-tax and tax revenue of, respectively, Afl. 6.0 million and Afl. 5.4 million. The rise in non-tax revenue was mostly associated with dividend distributions by a public entity to the government. The expansion in tax revenue was predominantly related to upturns in profit tax (+Afl. 3.4 million), import duties (+Afl. 1.7 million), turnover tax (B.B.O.) (+Afl. 1.1 million), foreign exchange tax (+Afl. 1.0 million) and wage tax (+Afl. 1.0 million). These increases were partly counterbalanced by drops in revenue from excises on tobacco and income tax of, respectively, Afl. 2.6 million and Afl. 1.3 million.



PUCUSANA : Guinea pigs, or cuyes, as they are known in South America, are bred at a farm in Pucusana, some 60 Km south of Lima. This rodent, originated in the Andean regions of South America, is valued for the nutritional quality of its meat, a traditional food of Peruvian, Colombian, and Ecuadorean Andean people. Over the last 50 years, Peruvian scientists have developed stronger and better strains of the cuy, (*Cavia Porcellus*), considered a staple in rural Andean foods for more than 3,000 years. (AFP PHOTO)



HO CHI MINH CITY : People eat during the opening of the country's first McDonald's restaurant in Ho Chi Minh city on February 8, 2014. Four decades after the Vietnam war ended, US fast-food giant McDonald's opened its first restaurant in the communist country on February 8, aiming to lure a rising middle class away from rice and noodles. (AFP PHOTO)

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SANTA ROSA : Russian River Brewing Company staff members drink the new release of Pliny the Younger triple IPA beer before opening the doors to the public on February 7, 2014 in Santa Rosa, California. Hundreds of people lined up hours before the opening of Russian River Brewing Co. to taste the 10th annual release of the wildly popular Pliny the Younger triple IPA beer that will only be available on tap from February 7th through February 20th. Craft beer aficionados rank Pliny the Younger as one of the top beers in the world. The craft beer sector of the beverage industry has grown from being a niche market into a fast growing 12 billion dollar business, as global breweries continue to purchase smaller regional craft breweries such as this week's purchase of New York's Blue Point Brewing by AB Inbev. (AFP PHOTO)



SINGAPORE : A worker peers out at the side of various airlines models on lay at the exhibition centre ahead of the Singapore's Airshow on February 9, 2014. Asia's top aerospace and defence show opens on February 11 in Singapore with major global arms makers seeking to cash in on rising military spending as territorial disputes escalate in the region. A wide range of air and maritime attack and surveillance systems will be showcased at the biennial Singapore Airshow, which will also feature the latest developments in commercial aviation, such

as Airbus' A350-XWB long-range aircraft.

(AFP PHOTO)

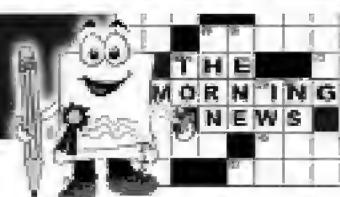
SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer

KFC	DEMI	ELSA
NEO	EVEN	MOAN
OER	WATCH	BAND
BLAND	SHEA	
	ORB	WRAPS
REVOLTS	KRIS	
POD	PEAKS	CNN
GLIB	WREATHS	
ALTER	WSW	
	GALS	SATAN
SPAGHETTI	RIO	
PONE	WARN	EMT
REND	SNAG	ESS

COMICS



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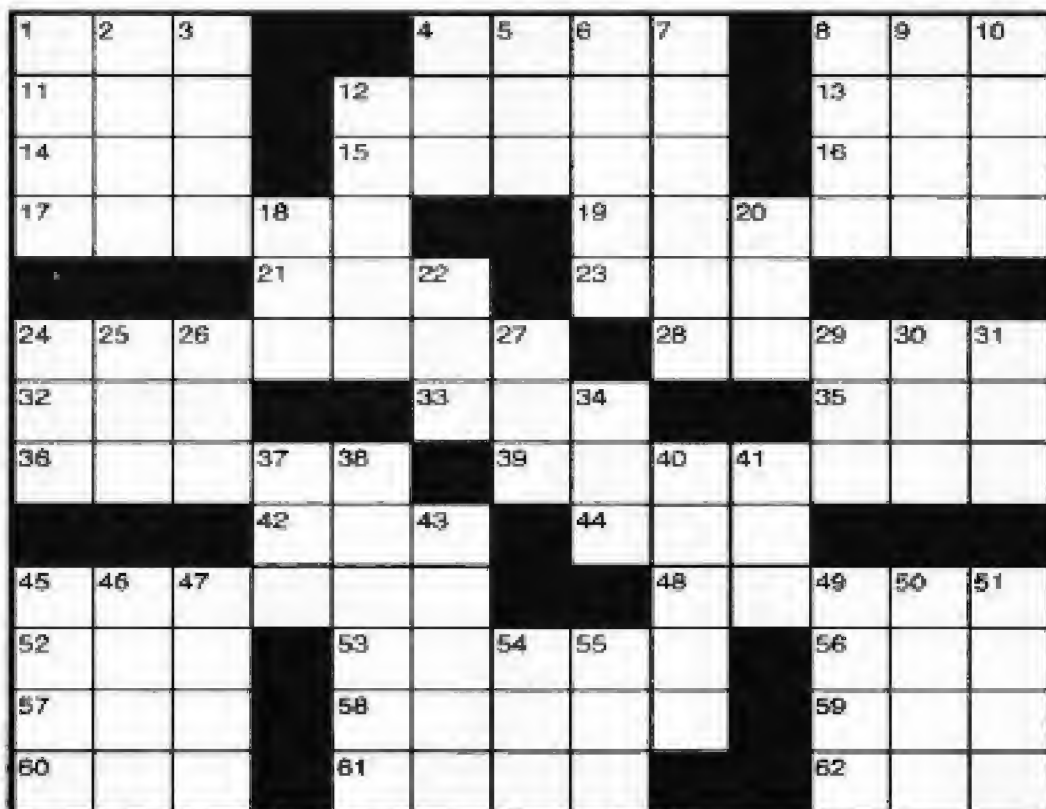
ACROSS

1. Chem. rm.
4. "That really hurts!"
8. Canine comment
11. Asia's neighbor (abbr.)
12. Golfer Palmer
13. Suffering
14. Dentists' gp.
15. Witch
16. Eden female
17. Native of India, often
19. Cutting tool
21. NYC transit org.
23. Witch
24. Aquatic mammals
28. Courted
32. Pacino and Unser
33. ___ and gown
35. Grippe
36. First letter, to Aristotle
39. Bakery treat
42. Tea cooler
44. Bite from a terrier
45. Specialist
48. Beau Bridges's dad
52. Jackie O's second husband

53. Midwest airport
56. Island wreath
57. Flowed
58. Farm towers
59. Service station purchase
60. Caustic cleanser
61. Glance over
62. Inquire

DOWN

1. Levi's mother
2. German auto
3. Outer coat of grain
4. Bobby of the Bruins
5. One, to Juan
6. Easy thing
7. Donkey sound
8. Intimidates
9. Ramble
10. Have emotions
12. Severe
18. Driver's ID issuer
20. "Here ___ again!" (2 wds.)
22. Circle section
24. Sheep's comment
25. Building addition
26. Cleopatra's snake
27. Cul-de-___
29. The chance ___ lifetime (2 wds.)
30. Antlered animal
31. Merited
34. Corny joke, perhaps
37. Move quickly
38. Crossword direction
40. Mounds
41. Military rank (abbr.)
43. Moral principle
45. "My Name Is ___"
46. Hospital "photo" (hyph.)
47. Woody fragrance
49. Korbut of gymnastics
50. Affirmative votes
51. Frisbee, e.g.
54. ___ king (2 wds.)
55. Harry Potter's pal



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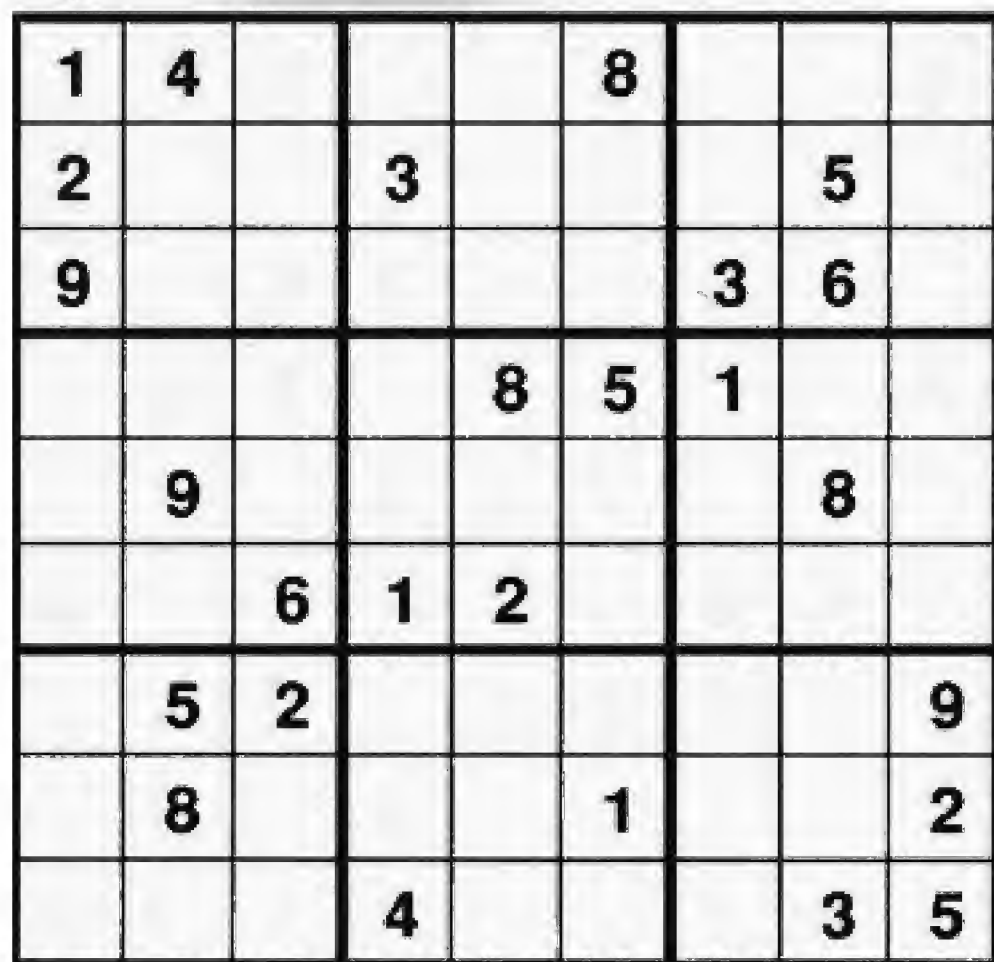
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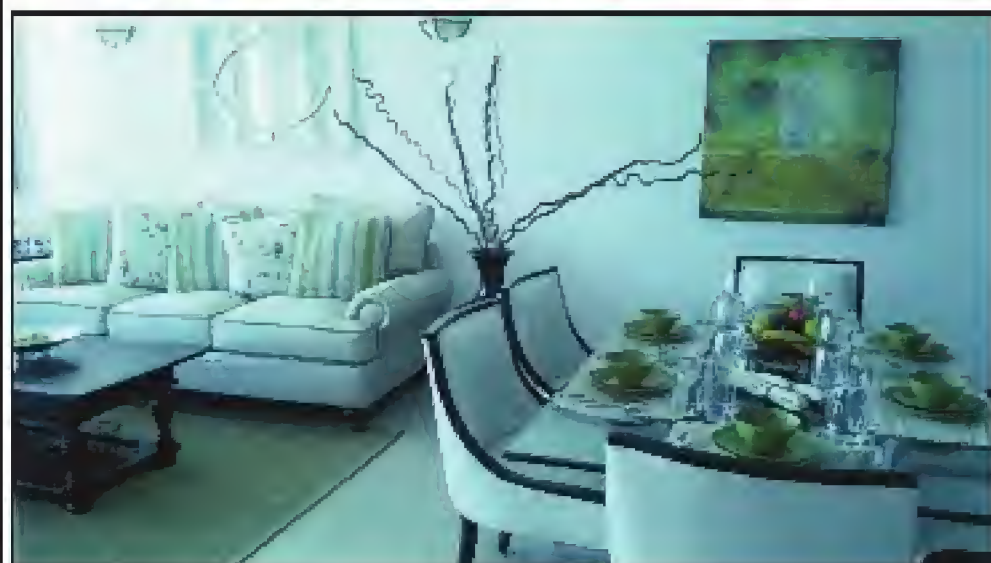


SOLUTION

5	6	8	2	4	9	8	1	9
2	9	8	1	5	8	2	8	6
6	1	4	9	6	8	2	5	9
9	2	8	8	2	1	9	8	8
8	8	2	2	9	2	1	6	5
5	6	1	9	8	9	9	2	2
8	9	6	1	2	8	2	4	6
1	5	9	2	6	8	8	8	2
2	2	8	8	9	5	6	1	1

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Acqua Condominium Aruba announces that construction has been progressing at a brisk pace



The East Tower, overlooking Palm Beach boasts 208 condos, spread over 14 floors. The two top building floors embrace 16 penthouse apartments with majestic views. The building is simply awaiting the windows and a few finishing

touches, to conclude construction, very possibly by the end of this year. Following the completion of the elegant clubhouse, the tropical landscaped pool and the spacious parking lots, the condos will be delivered to their proud new own-

ers. Ground has been cleared for the North Tower, which will follow as soon as the East Tower is completed.

A spokesperson for Acqua Condo Aruba reports that the project is receiving tremendous attention, particularly for the winter months. Snow-birds longing to reside in a vacation home on Aruba are now able to visualize this dream coming true, in a manner that leaves them utterly care free when not in residence.

Making the decision to purchase and acting on it quickly, was recently made even more imperative. In November of 2010, the island government of Aruba reiterated its commitment to a building moratorium for the next 10 years, making Acqua Condominium a truly unique investment opportunity, as it is the one and only high-rise condo project, on property land, in the island's most-desired location.

In view of the moratorium news, and the project's lucrative position, developers were compelled to discontinue the pre-construction discounts. Nevertheless, other purchase incentives have introduced. Special discount offers in ef-



fect at present are:

Prices start at \$ 296,800 for a 2-bedroom/2 bathroom apartment.

Paying cash will allow the buyer to obtain this very same unit for only \$ 222,600 -remarkable savings!

Other incentives: The opportunity to profit from your purchase is also available to buyers when they place their unit in a rental pool year.

If the image of Aqua Condominium tugs at your heartstrings, you are invited to visit the sales gallery and the two elegant model-suites available for viewing, fully finished with luxurious touches and high-end amenities.

The sales center is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. nonstop, and Saturday and Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. You are invited to meet the sales team who will guide you through the purchase of the stylish condo of your dreams, allowing you to return to Aruba as often as you wish.

You will find the website very helpful.

Take a virtual tour and garner info regarding all legal documents, floor plans, furnishings and finishing at: www.acquaruba.com

Acqua Condominium Aruba, J.E. Irausquin Boulevard z/n. Palm Beach Aruba.

Discover authentic Aruban cuisine at The Queen's



Enjoy a true taste of Aruba without having to travel in the charming surroundings of The Queen's Restaurant in the Palm Beach Plaza Mall. Your host, Varella Innocencia has brought her very popular Oranjestad eatery to Palm Beach, showcasing authentic local cuisine only a short walk away from the major resorts.

The "hipper" and elegant new digs offer beautiful views, but Mama Luisa's magical touch in the kitchen is what

first won this charming eatery their loyal clientele. She can be counted on to be conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations. As Varella says, "My mom loves and lives to cook. Even when she is not at work in the restaurant, she is experimenting with new dishes all day at home."

She is the Queen of the Kitchen."

Be sure to try Luisa's acclaimed "Carni Stoba di Ma-

machi" - "Grandma's Beef Stew," or their fresh, whole snapper, with Mama Luisa's delectable salsa criollo. Don't miss the specialty of the house, a favorite local delicacy, Keshi Yena - "Filled Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day, all incased in a thick skin of melted Gouda. It is satisfying and particularly memorable. Regional side dishes and some of Mama's secret recipe prepara-

Mama Luisa hard at work in the kitchen

tion of banana hasa and creamy potatoes provide a deliciously picturesque meal.

The Queen's is located on the second level of Palm Beach Plaza, tucked into a cozy corner at the front of the mall. If you have a mind to try the real deal in Aruban food, without a doubt, this is the way to go, reasonably priced and easily accessible. A full menu can be seen on their website, <http://www.thequeensaruba.com/>.

Aside from an extensive regular menu they also have daily specials made from whatever is in season, and Mama Luisa is in the mood to prepare, so don't be shy about asking for something that may not be on the menu, as they are always eager to please.

The Queen's is open daily from 3:00 pm - 11:00 pm, offering both indoor and outdoor dining. Telf. 5860606.

Who won what at

SOCHI - (AFP)

TEAM - Figure skating

National idol Yevgeny Plushenko and rising star Julia Lipnitskaia got hosts Russia off the mark sealing gold in the inaugural team figure skating.

It was a fourth Olympic medal for the 31-year-old but his achievement was almost overshadowed by Lipnitskaia, who sealed gold at the age of just 15 to euphoria at the Iceberg Skating Palace.

Watched by President Vladimir Putin, Russia took a precious gold on home soil even before the final round -- the ice dance free dance.

Ice dancers Elena Ilinykh and Nikita Katsalapov then stepped up and placed third behind Americans Meryl Davis and Charlie White and Canadians Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir.

The hosts won five of the eight sections over three days of competition to take gold with 75 points. Canada took silver with 65 with the United States bronze medallists with 60.

"I'm 31 years and this means everything to me. It's so much history," said 2006 Olympic champion and two-time silver medalist Plushenko.

MEN - Alpine skiing - downhill

Austrian tyro Matthias Mayer stormed to gold in the blue riband men's downhill.

The 23-year-old clocked 2min 06.23sec down the 3.5km-long course for the first Austrian downhill gold since Fritz Stroebel in the 2002 Games at Salt Lake City.

Mayer also bettered his father Helmut's silver-medal showing in the super-G at the Calgary Games in 1998.

"Of course it means a lot to me," an emotional Mayer said. "It's really difficult to go down the track without mistakes."

Italian Christof Innerhofer took silver at just six-hundredths behind with Norway's Kjetil Jansrud claiming bronze, a further 0.04sec adrift.

World downhill champion Aksel Lund Svindal was fourth and another strong favourite, Bode Miller of the United States, was eighth.

Nordic skiing - Skiathlon

Switzerland's Dario Cologna powered to victory in the men's skiathlon, hanging on for the second Olympic gold of his career in an enthralling final sprint.

Cologna pushed ahead of his rivals with a bold move before the final corner and just



managed to keep his lead finishing in 1hr 08min 15.4sec ahead of an attacking Marcus Hellner of Sweden who took silver in 1:08:15.8.

Martin Johnsrud Sundby of Norway and Maxim Vylegzhanin of Russia engaged in a titanic struggle for bronze with the Norwegian winning by an inch in a time of 1:08:16.8.

Luge - singles

Germany's Felix Loch retained his Olympic title with the 24-year-old upsetting Russian Albert Demchenko's hopes of becoming the oldest ever Olympic champion at the age of 42.

Loch -- an eight-time world champion, four each in singles and teams -- finished with a combined time of 3min 27.526sec after the four runs.

Demchenko, the world champion in 2004/05, was 0.476sec behind with double Olympic champion Armin Zoeggeler of Italy third at 1.271sec.

Ski jumping - normal hill

World Cup leader Kamil Stoch of Poland won the normal hill gold with jumps of 105.5m and 103.5m for a total of 278 points.

Slovenia's Peter Prevc was second with 265.3 pts and Norway's Anders Bardal, 264.1 pts, claimed bronze.

Switzerland's Simon Ammann, 32, who came to Sochi as the reigning champion at both normal and large hills, which he won in 2006 at Turin and in 2010 in Vancouver, failed to earn a record fifth Olympic gold finishing in 17th position.

WOMEN - Snowboard - slopestyle

Jamie Anderson gave the United States a slopestyle double following Sage Kotsenburg's victory in the men's competition.

The four-time X-Games winner produced the goods on her second run with a near-perfect 95.25 score.

That pushed Finland's Enni



Russia's Nikita Katsalapov and Russia's Elena Ilinykh perform

Rukajarvi down to second after her second run had produced a long-time leading 92.50.

Britain's Jenny Jones held onto third with 87.25 for her country's first ever medal on snow.

Speed skating - 3,000m

Dutchwoman Ireen Wust powered to victory, stealing gold from defending Olympic champion Martina Sablikova.

Wust, the winner of the event at the 2006 Turin Games, raced in the penultimate pair, immediately after Sablikova had moved into the gold medal position, crossing the line in a time of 4min 0.34sec.

Sablikova of the Czech Republic finished 1.61sec adrift in the silver medal position while Olga Graf won Russia's first medal of the Games, a bronze, in 4:03.47.

Biathlon - 7.5km sprint

Defending champion Anastasiya Kuzmina of Slovakia became the first woman to win two Olympic titles in the same individual biathlon when she stormed to victory in the 7.5km sprint.

The Russian-born Kuzmina won in a time of 21min 06min 8sec to see off Russia's Olga Vilukhina who was 19.9sec behind. Vita Semerenko of Ukraine took bronze, 21.7sec behind the champion.

the Winter Olympics



Wust gives Dutch her second straight speedskating gold



King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of Holland were among a healthy Orange contingent within the Adler Arena Skating Center to see the 27-year-old Wust fly to victory with a time of four minutes 0.34 seconds.



Germany's Felix Loch retained his Olympic title



(LtoR) Silver medalist Slovenia's Peter Prevc, Gold medalist Poland's Kamil Stoch and Bronze medalist Norway's Anders Bardal celebrate during the Men's Ski Jumping Normal Hill Individual Flower Ceremony at the RusSki Gorki Jumping Center



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Tennis: Italy, Australia, Germany into FedCup semi-finals

PARIS (AFP) - Italy kept their Fed Cup title defence on track Sunday, downing the United States to join Australia and Germany in the semi-finals of the women's tennis competition.

Karin Knapp claimed the decisive third point for Italy, giving them an unbeatable 3-0 lead with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over American Alison Riske.

The holders won't know their opponents for the April 19-20 semi-finals until today, after rain in Seville forced decisive matches in Spain's clash with the Czech Republic to be pushed back with the hosts holding a 1-0 lead.

Both Italy and the United States were without their top players for the tie on an indoor hard court in Cleveland, Ohio.

Italy, seeking a fifth Fed



Cup in nine years, were without Sara Errani and Flavia Pennetta, while the United States were without injured stars Serena Williams and Sloane Stephens.

But Knapp, ranked 40th in the world, came through with two victories. She opened the tie with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 win over Christina McHale on Saturday, when Camila Giorgi crushed US teen Madison Keys 6-2, 6-1.

In the meaningless doubles match, Keys and Lauren Davis teamed up to beat Nastassja

Burnett and Alice Matteucci 6-2, 6-3 and prevent the white-wash, giving Italy a final 3-1 triumph.

In Hobart, Australia ensured their place in the next round for the first time in 21 years with a crushing Samantha Stosur-inspired 4-0 defeat of Russia.

The Germans, who were last crowned champions in 1992, qualified 3-1 after Angelique Kerber defeated Slovakia's Australian Open runner-up Dominika Cibulkova 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) in the first of the reverse singles in Bratislava.

Baseball: Rodriguez drops lawsuits against league, union

NEW YORK (AFP) - Embattled New York Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez on Friday dropped his lawsuits against Major League Baseball, including one seeking a dismissal of his 162-game doping suspension.

The major lawsuit, also filed against the major league players' union, was filed January 14 at US District Court in New York, two days after federal arbitrator Fredric Horowitz upheld the one-season ban for 2014 against the 38-year-old superstar whose legacy has been tainted by drugs.

The other lawsuit was filed last year and accused major league officials of being on a "witch hunt" against Rodriguez.

Rodriguez was banned over evidence collected in the Biogenesis clinic doping scandal that was uncovered last year and led to the biggest doping scandal in baseball history, which saw 12 other players admit guilt and take lesser bans.

Major League Baseball imposed a harsher penalty against Rodriguez because he took measures to impede the investigation into the scandal and Horowitz upheld it on appeal, saying there was clear and convincing evidence of doping and trying to obstruct the probe.

Rodriguez accused Horowitz of being partial in the league's favor, but on Friday, the day Rodriguez was due to respond to the league and union wanting the case dismissed, Rodriguez pulled it himself.

"We have been informed that Alex Rodriguez has reached the prudent decision to end all of the litigation related to the Biogenesis matter," a statement from Major League Baseball said.

"We believe that Mr. Rodriguez's actions show his desire to return the focus to the play of our great game on the field and to all of the positive attributes and actions of his fellow major league players. We share that desire."

A statement from the players union said Rodriguez had "done the right thing."

While the 38-year-old stand-out could refile his lawsuit, the voluntary dismissal is likely the end of his efforts to fight the ban and could pave the way for his return in 2015 to fulfill the remaining years on his contract, a 10-year deal worth \$275 million signed in 2007 that is the richest in baseball history.

"A-Rod", whose 654 career home runs are 108 shy of Barry Bonds' all-time record, will lose \$25 million in salary from the Yankees this year, or about \$154,000 for every game missed.

Rodriguez, who in 2009 admitted that he took steroids while playing for the Texas Rangers from 2001 to 2003, would be 39 when he returns to play in 2015.

The Yankees could still go to court to argue that Rodriguez should not be paid the remaining \$61 million on his deal from 2015-2017.

2014 Caribbean baseball series



PORLAMAR (AFP) - Players of Mexico's Naranjeros de Hermosillo celebrate after winning the 2014 Caribbean baseball series defeating Puerto Rico's Indios de Mayaguez, on Saturday, in Porlamar city, Margarita Island, Venezuela. Overall, Mexico has won eight Caribbean Series titles since it began participating in the annual tournament in 1970. Naranjeros de Hermosillo defeated Puerto Rico's Indios de Mayaguez, 7-1.



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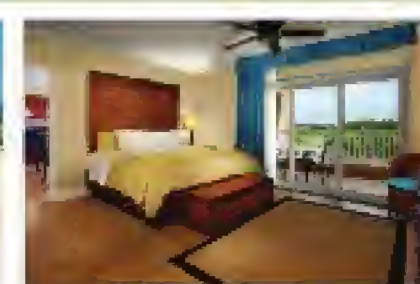
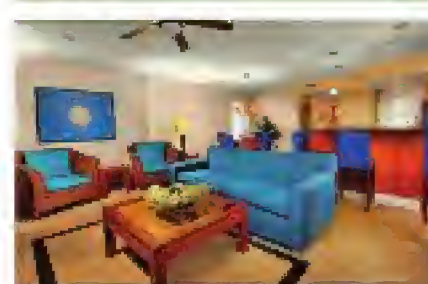
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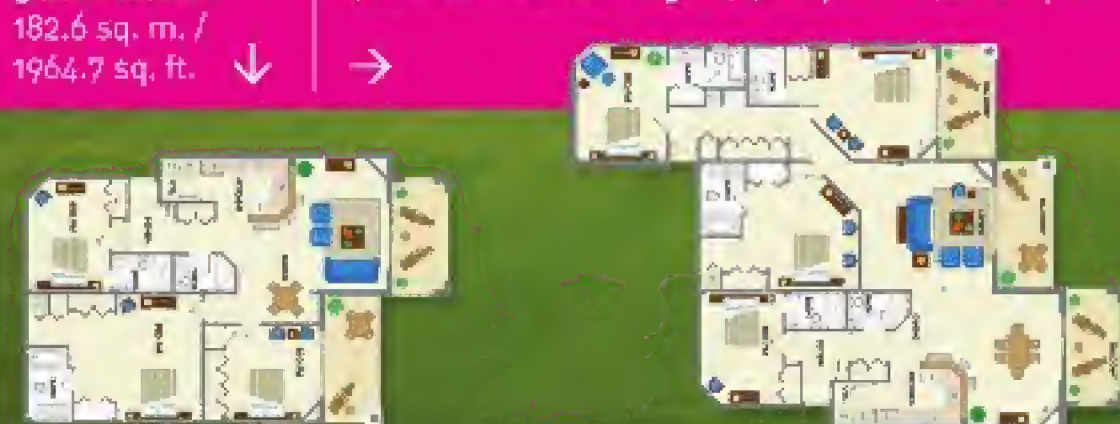
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Olympics: Women ski jumpers ready to make history in Sochi

ROZA KHUTOR (AFP) - The world's best ski jumpers take to the skies for gold in Sochi with women set to make history in their first ever Olympic appearance and Austria facing pressure in the men's events.

Training at the brand new Russki Gorki jumping centre in the hills above Sochi were the women's competition starts on Tuesday.

Established stars and up-and-coming legends will try to write their names into the history book of their sport, which has been included in the programme of all of the Olympics since the very first Winter Games took place at Chamonix, France in 1924.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) installed the women's event to the programme for the 2014 Olympic Games after growing pressure from female ski-jumpers for inclusion into the Games, ending ski jumping's status as one of few men-only disciplines.

Japanese ski jumping superstar Sara Takanashi, who is considered to be a red-hot favourite of the Games, con-



firmed her star status by making it two wins from two World Cup events in the Austrian resort of Hinzenbach in the run-up to the Games.

With this win the 17-year-old, who also won her fourth successive world junior title earlier this month, has further strengthened her tag as favourite heading into the Winter Olympics.

Japan failed to win any gold medals at the Vancouver Olympics so country's expectations are focused on the high-school student Takanashi.

She said it would be the third time that she has com-

peted on the Sochi hill after finishing second and third in two competitions in 2012.

Since its Winter Olympics debut in 1924, ski jumping (men) has been dominated by three countries: Finland, Norway and Austria.

Those three countries have won 74 total medals since. Meanwhile, the rest of the world has won just 49.

Norway leads the score with 29 medals. They are followed by Austria with 23 medals so far, while Finland is in third with 22 medals. However, Finland holds the advantage on golds, winning 10 so far.

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